

Greek Orthodox 'Special Days'

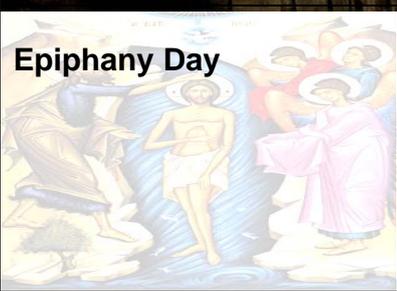


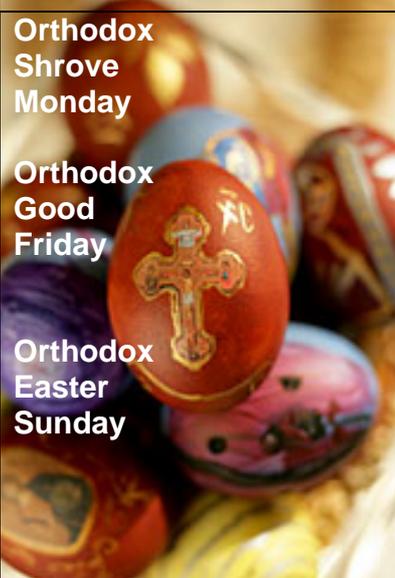
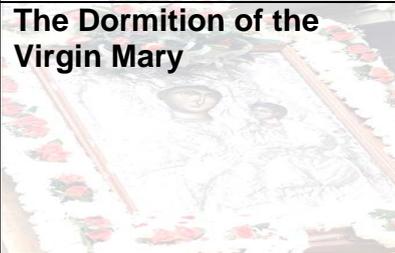
Greek name days

Name Days or Saint Days are the feast day of a saint who an individual is named after. Name days are important to older Greeks. A person's actual birthday could pass without much notice, but his/her Name Day is celebrated traditionally with a party, giving of small gifts and perhaps attendance at Church.

Shared special days

This listing is not intended to be exhaustive; rather it lists the major shared 'special days'. You should check with the person or his/her family if there are other special days that are important to that person.

Festivity	Date	Customary practices
 <p>New Year's Day</p>	1 January	<p>The Feast of St Basil is associated with a good start for the new year.</p> <p>An old Byzantine custom of slicing the <i>Vassilopita</i> (Basil cake or New Year Cake) gives the person who finds the hidden coin in his slice, good luck for the year.</p>
 <p>Epiphany Day</p>	6 January	<p>Epiphany (when St John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the river Jordan) is celebrated throughout Greece when the Blessing of the Waters takes place. A cross is thrown into the sea, lakes or rivers and retrieved by swimmers who are then entitled to good luck.</p>
 <p>The Annunciation and Greek National Independence Day</p>	25 March	<p>This day has dual significance for Greek people. Firstly it celebrates the Annunciation from the Archangel Gabriel to Mary that she will conceive the son of god.</p> <p>Secondly it is the formal proclamation of the Greek War of Independence against Turkish rule on 25 March 1821.</p>

May Day	1 May	May Day and the Feast of the Flowers in Greece. This is a celebration of Spring and rebirth. Celebrations include maypole dancing, country picnics and kite flying.
 <p>Orthodox Shrove Monday</p> <p>Orthodox Good Friday</p> <p>Orthodox Easter Sunday</p>		<p>Shrove Monday is the commencement of fasting, although not all Greek people fast, especially if they are ill.</p> <p>Greek families are likely to take a resident home during the Easter period. No meat is consumed on Good Friday.</p> <p>Easter Sunday is the biggest church holiday in Greece. After Church families usually gather for a festive lunch.</p> <p>Red eggs are cracked against each other and the person with the last remaining uncracked egg will have good luck.</p>
 <p>The Dormition of the Virgin Mary</p>	15 August	The day of the Panagia (Virgin Mary) is the second biggest religious holiday after Easter, celebrated on 15 August after two weeks of fasting
 <p>Greek National Day</p>	28 October	The 28th is Ohi Day, ('ohi' meaning no) celebrating the Greek refusal to let Italy occupy the country during WWII. The Italians invaded and were driven back into Albania and nearly back to Italy. There are military parades in the major towns and cities.
Christmas Day	25 December	Some Greeks may fast (no eating meat) for 40 days before Christmas. The Christmas meal is usually roast pork, vegetables, salads and cake.
Boxing Day	26 December	Usually a day for picnics.